

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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REPS. MARKEY, TIERNEY INVESTIGATE SEABROOK NUCLEAR REACTOR FENCE MALFUNCTION

*Allegations that fence has never worked, and security guards working too much
overtime*

Washington, DC: Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Member of the Homeland Security Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee, the panel which oversees the regulation of nuclear reactors, and Representative John F. Tierney (D-MA) the only New England member on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, today released a letter to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regarding serious security problems alleged by an employee of the Seabrook nuclear power plant.

“Once again, while the NRC says ‘everything is ok,’ it turns out that this assertion doesn’t hold water,” said Rep. Markey. “After Seabrook allegedly violated one set of NRC regulations by failing to install an operable security fence, it then seems to have compensated for this failure by violating a different set of NRC regulations related to how much overtime security guards can be forced to work. This is unacceptable.”

Rep. Markey’s office was informed by an employee of the Seabrook nuclear power plant located in Seabrook, NH, that last year, a perimeter intrusion detection system was installed at the reactor site. The system was supposed to alarm if an intruder attempted to penetrate the fence surrounding the facility. However, in an inspection that reportedly occurred earlier this month, NRC personnel concluded that the system had been incorrectly installed, had never been operational, and would likely have to be replaced. In the meantime, Seabrook officials are reportedly using reactor security guard forces to compensate for the inoperable security system, and have violated NRC regulations by forcing these security guards to work excessive amounts of overtime.

“For eight years on the Government Reform’s Subcommittee on Energy we have been pressing the NRC to enforce stricter safety precaution at our nuclear facilities. The repeated shortfalls in compliance make continued aggressive oversight essential. In light of these recent concerns that continued to be raised regarding the security at the power plant, it is imperative that the NRC take appropriate action to protect public safety,” said Rep. Tierney.

The Congressmen’s letter requested information about results of and follow-up associated with the NRC inspection, as well as whether the NRC plans to investigate the allegations of forcing the reactor security guards to put in excessive amounts of overtime.

For a copy of the Congressmen’s letter or more information regarding Rep. Markey’s other work in the area of nuclear reactor security, please see www.house.gov/markey.

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